South African oranges gain access to Vietnamese market

A new bilateral protocol, opening the Vietnamese market to South African oranges, has been signed by the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) together with the Southern Africa Citrus Growers' Association. This is good news ahead of the 2024 citrus export season, which will start to ramp up in April.

Source: 123RF

The opening of this market offers an export potential of 15,000 tonnes of oranges. This will translate into more job opportunities and revenue generation.

This historic protocol comes almost a decade after a change in Vietnamese import regulations necessitated a new protocol. DALRRD and the CGA have in that time worked together to make sure local citrus growers will benefit from increased market access. Their collaborative efforts were underpinned by extensive technical work provided by Citrus Research International, a subsidiary of the CGA.

Opening new export opportunities

Part of the Department's strategy and commitment to support farmers is driving export-led inclusive growth in the agricultural sector.
Minister of the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, Thoko Didiza reaffirmed this position in 2023 when she addressed the CGA's Citrus Summit, encouraging the industry players to work with the Department to expedite greater market access for citrus in the East.

Phytosanitary necessities have also since been agreed on by Vietnam and South Africa. A recent final adjustment was the removal of two pests from the official pest list. A new cold treatment protocol was set out in the phytosanitary import requirements document by the Plant Protection Department of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Vietnam.

In a joint statement, DALRRD and the CGA said: "The opening of the Vietnam market is a major win for the citrus industry, especially considering that the South African citrus industry has the potential to increase its exports from 165 million to 260 million cartons (1 carton is equivalent to 15 kilograms) in the next eight years if all role-players work together as envisioned in the Agriculture and Agro-processing Master Plan (AAMP)."

They also expressed their gratitude to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Vietnam. "A supply of our local oranges to Vietnam is in the interest of both the Vietnamese consumer and the South African citrus grower."